

“The King Returns”
2 Samuel 19:8-40
(Preached at Trinity, December 29, 2019)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After his victory over the insurrection of Absalom, David is finally about to return to Jerusalem. It was a great period of uncertainty. Multitudes had followed Absalom. How would David treat those who had rebelled against him? Would there be executions? What about those who came asking for forgiveness?
2. This is the quandary faced by all men. Having rebelled against the throne of God how can we return to His favor?
3. After the battle had ended everyone fled to their homes.
2 Samuel 18:17 NAU - "They took Absalom and cast him into a deep pit in the forest and erected over him a very great heap of stones. And all Israel fled, each to his tent."
2 Samuel 19:8 NAU - "Now Israel had fled, each to his tent."
4. David had two options.
 - A. Having been victorious over Absalom, he could have marched into Jerusalem, taken military control of the city, and crushed any remaining opposition.
 - B. He could graciously wait until he is invited back. David takes this option. He was first received by the ten tribes. His own tribe of Judah held back.
David then turns to Judah.
5. David mirrors Christ in his display of mercy. He sent a message to the elders of Judah.
2 Samuel 19:11-12 NAU - "Then King David sent to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, saying, "Speak to the elders of Judah, saying, 'Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the word of all Israel has come to the king, even to his house? ¹² 'You are my brothers; you are my bone and my flesh. Why then should you be the last to bring back the king?'"
6. Then David does something that is hard to explain. He declared that Amasa would replace Joab as the commander of his army. Why would he demote the general who had just led his army to victory and promote the general who had led the rival army?
Both were David's nephews. Both had serious flaws. Amasa had been in charge of the insurgents. And Joab continually crossed David.
 - A. One might argue that David was doing the same thing Joab had done. If Joab claimed his actions were to preserve the nation David could also claim his actions were also politically astute. David often made decisions that were politically advantageous. If Judah feared David's wrath for their infidelity, the promotion of Amasa would have put away their fears.
 - B. It could also be argued that this was David's just chastisement of Joab for his past actions, particularly the death of Absalom. This was a dangerous move for David. Joab was not a man to cross. Yet, David knew Joab was not likely to turn against the king—it would not have been to his advantage.

- C. Regardless of David's reasons, it was a mirror of God's grace and mercy to alienated sinners. David sent his priests, Zadok and Abiathar to announce his mercy and restoration to Judah.
In like manner, God charges His ministers to announce His reconciliation to the world.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 NAU** - "Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."
 - D. William Blaikie likened David's generosity to the amazing grace of our own King: "When it became known that the leader of the rebel forces was not only not to be punished, but actually promoted to the highest office in the king's service, all fears were completely scattered. It was an act of wonderful clemency. It was such a contrast to the usual treatment of rebels! But this king was not like other kings; he gave gifts even to the rebellious. There was no limit to his generosity. Where sin abounded grace did much more abound."¹
7. David was but a man, with all the flaws of sinful humanity. But at times he also reflected God's grace typical of Christ. In this passage I want us to see several examples of David as a type of Christ.
- I. First, we find an occasion where David holds forth mercy to one deserving of death
- Verses 16-23**
- A. Shemei came running to David
 - 2 Samuel 19:16 NAU** - "Then Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjamite who was from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David."
 - 1. The last time we saw Shemei he was cursing the king
 - 2 Samuel 16:5-6 NAU** - "When King David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out from there a man of the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out cursing continually as he came.⁶ He threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David; and all the people and all the mighty men were at his right hand and at his left."
 - 2 Samuel 16:13 NAU** - "So David and his men went on the way; and Shimei went along on the hillside parallel with him and as he went he cursed and cast stones and threw dust at him."
 - 2. Shemei was of the house of Saul. Saul's death and David's rise to the throne would have had a negative impact upon him. Shemei hated David for this. He used the rise of Absalom to vent his feelings to David.

¹ Blaikie, William Garden. (2005). *Expository Lectures on the Book of 2 Samuel*. (Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books), pages 293.

- 3. His insults upon the king were indeed worthy of death, but David spared him. David knew Absalom's rise was God's just judgment upon his sins with Bathsheba.
 - 4. But Now Absalom is dead and David is being restored to his rightful place upon the throne.
Shimei comes running towards David. He is accompanied by a thousand kinsmen of the tribe of Benjamin. Ziba is also with him, although nothing more is said about him here. He was as guilty as Shimei in turning from his master as well as deceiving the king. Would he find mercy from David?
 - 5. In spite of the multitude surrounding him Shimei is in a terrible predicament. With Absalom in charge Shimei didn't expect David to return.
But he had made a major miscalculation. With David returning how could he now entreat his favor?
- B. David holds forth mercy instead of condemnation
- 1. The natural conclusion was to bring swift justice to Shimei. This was the opinion of David's commander:
2 Samuel 19:21 NAU - "But Abishai the son of Zeruiah said, "Should not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD'S anointed?"
This was the same conclusion Abishai had come to when Shimei came cursing David:
2 Samuel 16:9 NAU - "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over now and cut off his head."
 - 2. Instead, David offered mercy.
As rebels who abused and cursed the King mercy is held out to us. Jesus Christ is a gracious and merciful King who offers peace and reconciliation.
- C. But mercy is only held out for those who surrender to the King.
Mercy is held out for those who truly repent.
- 1. Shimei appeared to repent but was it genuine? Is the one who previously cursed the king now coming to bless the king?
2 Samuel 19:19-20 NAU - "So he said to the king, "Let not my lord consider me guilty, nor remember what your servant did wrong on the day when my lord the king came out from Jerusalem, so that the king would take *it* to heart. ²⁰ "For your servant knows that I have sinned; therefore behold, I have come today, the first of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."
 - a. If Shimei came to humble himself and repent, what's with the show of force? **Verse 17** - "There were a thousand men of Benjamin with him"
 - b. We might presume that if Absalom would have been victorious and David remained in exile Shimei would have continued his words of derision. His repentance was merely an effort to avoid David's retribution.

- c. Dale Ralph David gives a good analysis: "There is no reason to hold that Shimei had undergone any massive change of heart. He had committed a tactical error called treason and now he must save his skin, if he can. He does not submit to David out of love but out of policy."²
 - d. It reminds us of our Lord's words of judgment seat repentance when multitudes will plead their good deeds. They'll say whatever necessary but it will be too late to make peace with the King.
2. Shimei was a man under David's condemnation. Mercy must not be abused nor the terms of mercy squandered.
- 1 Kings 2:8-9 NAU** - "Behold, there is with you Shimei the son of Gera the Benjamite, of Bahurim; now it was he who cursed me with a violent curse on the day I went to Mahanaim. But when he came down to me at the Jordan, I swore to him by the LORD, saying, 'I will not put you to death with the sword!'⁹ "Now therefore, do not let him go unpunished, for you are a wise man; and you will know what you ought to do to him, and you will bring his gray hair down to Sheol with blood."
3. Shimei squandered David's mercy.
- 1 Kings 2:43-44 NAU** - "Why then have you not kept the oath of the LORD, and the command which I have laid on you?"⁴⁴ The king also said to Shimei, "You know all the evil which you acknowledge in your heart, which you did to my father David; therefore the LORD shall return your evil on your own head."
4. This should serve as a warning to those who squander God's mercy today. God holds forth His offer of mercy for those who repent and rest upon the merits of Christ. If we squander this time of mercy we must expect God's full retribution at the Day of Judgment.

II. The next person encountered is Mephibosheth. For Mephibosheth David delivers justice – **Verses 24-30**

- A. Mephibosheth had been terribly slandered by his servant, Ziba

2 Samuel 16:3 NAU - "Then the king said, "And where is your master's son?" And Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.'

- 1. The implication is Mephibosheth had joined the ranks of Absalom—that he believed David had wrongly succeeded Saul as king and that he was the rightful heir—"the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me."
- 2. This was untrue. Ziba slandered his master in order to seize his property.
See Verses 26-27
- 3. David's solution: **Verse 29** - "You and Ziba shall divide the land."
- 4. That may not sound like justice for us. We might expect something more like the justice of Abishai: "Should not Shimei be put to death for this."

² Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity*, Focus on the Bible Commentary, (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2002), 243.

5. David had wrongly received the testimony of Ziba without the necessary 2 or three witnesses. And now there is the opposing testimony of Mephibosheth, also without the burden of witnesses.
And Mephibosheth's words were a bit overdone. Was it proper for him to speak of his father, Jonathan, as he does in **Verse 28**.
In **Verse 29** David finally says in essence, "Enough!"
So, David divides the land.
 6. At the same time, the testimony of Mephibosheth was credible.
We need to remember the condition of Mephibosheth. He was crippled. Ziba and his sons had been charged with his care.
2 Samuel 9:9-10 NAU - "Then the king called Saul's servant Ziba and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. ¹⁰ "You and your sons and your servants shall cultivate the land for him, and you shall bring in the produce so that your master's grandson may have food; nevertheless Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall eat at my table regularly." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants."
 7. The text literally reads, "You and Ziba shall share the land."
What David did was return Ziba and his house to the responsibility of working the land and providing for the care of Mephibosheth.
- B. Mephibosheth had previously been granted the blessings of sitting at David's table. This would not be taken away from him.
1. This is the blessing of sonship
2 Samuel 9:11 NAU - "Mephibosheth ate at David's table as one of the king's sons."
 2. God will not fail to provide for His own.
Even when it seems like our enemies have prevailed, God has not forgotten us. His justice will prevail.

Conclusion:

1. The great contrast between David and Jesus is found in the fact of David's sinfulness compared to the perfection of Christ. Jesus in His sinless perfection chose to display mercy.
 - A. Jesus who knew no sin and who needed no mercy chose to be merciful.
 - B. David who needed mercy was shown mercy and was forgiven of his adultery. This one who was shown mercy understood the importance of showing mercy.
 2. Is this not true for us? Those who have received mercy must be merciful. Those who have received grace should be gracious. Those who have been forgiven should be forgiving.
- Matthew 6:14-15 NAU** - "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."